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THE
PROGRESS
AND
RESULTS OF EMANCIPATION
IN THE
ENGLISH WEST INDIES.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHILOMATHIAN SOCIETY OF THE
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BY
JOHN JAY,
OF BEDFORD, N. Y.

"SLAVES CANNOT BREATHE IN ENGLAND."—*Cowper.*

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• JUSTITIA REGIS pax est populorum, tutamen patriæ, immunitas plebis, temperies aëris, securitas maris, terræ fœcunditas, hereditas filiorum, denique ipsa sibimet spes beatudinis futuræ.—*Gregorius Nazianzenus.*

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It is a pleasant thing, my friends, amid the vice and cruelty visible all around us ; amid the treachery of man towards man, and of nation towards nation, to be able to cast our eyes, as we are about to do this evening, at one little island group dotting the ocean with its green hills, where justice has triumphed and power has fallen before right ; where the love of Liberty has been reduced from an abstraction to a reality, and the conduct of a great country, which we love to remember as our *Mother-land*, has fully accorded with her glorious principles. Even ENGLAND has not always been an exception to the rule, that nations as well as individuals are characterized by the grossest inconsistencies. Not to cite our own country, that sad instance pre-eminent among all civilized people, we may name the Swiss as a striking example of national inconsistency. We look back to the 14th century, and amid the general profligacy of Europe we find the cantons of Ury and Underwald boldly resisting the tyrannical usurpation of the Emperor Rudolph, and at the pass of Morgate 1600 Swiss successfully defending the cause of freedom against 20,000 Austrians. Sixty

pitched battles were fought to secure their dear-earned liberty, and as we follow them through succeeding centuries, we see canton after canton joining the association and read of noble heroism and daring deeds that will forever live with the remembrance of Lucerne and Zurich : Glaris, Zug, and Berne : Friburg, and Solerne : Basle, and Shaffhausen. Our bosoms glow with sympathetic emotion, and we are feign to imagine, that though other lands might boast their love of freedom, Switzerland was the very home of her worshippers, and that each drop of Switzer blood that had stained her snowy glaciers, or been drunk in by her green valleys, was shed in the purest devotion to her noble cause. We turn from this people in time of war, fighting for their children, and their hearthstones, expecting to see them in the peaceful days that follow the struggle, relinquishing the sword for the spade and the pruning hook, to reap in quiet thankfulness, the fruits of their exertions. Alas ! we find no such result. Natural as were our anticipations, they are yet disappointed by the unutterable deceitfulness of the human heart, and the inexplicable enigmas of human conduct. Peace dawns upon the Swiss valleys, and her people are free as the *chamois* on her mountains, but the sword is still unsheathed, and ready to be wielded against any nation, friend or foe, far or near, in behalf of any other, that will repay their butchery with gold.

If actual deeds can thus mislead us in forming an estimate of character, how much more shall words ? It costs but little to be philanthropic in opinion, just and righteous in avowal ; and we are not obliged to recur to other lands or other ages to satisfy ourselves of the truth, that profession is often empty and heartless, that there is no virtue without effort, and that to thousands it would be the severest trial to practice for a day principles which they profess during their whole lives. It is in-

deed a sad mistake for individuals or nations to suppose that an idle eulogy of the commands of Jehovah will be received by Him in lieu of their observance, or that vice is less odious in His pure eyes, when to the sin of disobedience is added that of hypocrisy; yet does this doctrine seem to obtain with all the world, and with our countrymen in particular; and from the spectacle ever present to our view, in Republican Democratic America, of

“Whips and charters, manacles and rights,”

we turn with a feeling of gladness and relief to the West Indian dependencies of the royal crown of England.

To obtain a connected view of the progress of emancipation, we must revert, for a moment, to the days of Wilberforce, and Sharpe, and Clarkson, and the commencement of the righteous war waged against slavery and the slave trade. It is seldom that we can recall the ages that are gone, or ponder the records of the past, with any feeling of delight.

“Time, mighty Painter on the walls immense,
Of this rough world, what colours he has thrown
Of souls—of ages—”*

but how gloomy are his choicest pictures; and the lessons we draw from them, at what an expense of human suffering are they given, as each succeeding age adds to the vast gallery new portraits and untold scenes. We are about to look at the outlines of a picture, still growing in strength and beauty beneath the pencil of this mightiest artist, and forming, even now, a more delightful study, than thousands that were limned when the world was young; whose colours are mellowed by the lapse of time, and dimmed by the dust of ages.

* MS. Poem by Rev. A. C. Cox.

Slavery has fallen in those colonies after a gloomy reign of centuries. Tens and hundreds of thousands of immortal spirits, under its bitter tyranny, were born to sorrow, and lived in wretchedness, and died in darkness. During that lengthened period, science pursued her discoveries into the recesses of the earth and along the pathway of the stars. The philosopher dived deep into the mysteries of nature, and attempted to fathom the depth of the human intellect. The scholar pushed his researches far back into ancient times to glean wisdom from the works of the mighty dead, while statesmen adjusted the balance of empires, and settled principles of international law. Years rolled on, and philanthropists visited the prisoner, comforted the sick, and relieved the afflicted. The ministers of religion discoursed of truth, and justice, and mercy; and the glorious gospel, no longer chained to the desks of a profligate priesthood, extended further and further its blessed rays. Yet still the African slave trade flourished in all its enormity, and its wretched victims, uncared for and forgotten, groaned on tropical plantations.

Neither the philosopher nor the scholar, the statesmen nor the professed philanthropist, the worldly moralist nor the divinely commissioned teacher, ever thought of questioning its righteousness, or doubting of its justice. Men of all classes participated in the traffic and partook of its spoils, and even in the latter part of the 18th century, both Commoners and Lords of England were interested in West Indian plantations, and the Established Church was a sharer in their unholy gains. The antiquity of the system was sufficient to remove every scruple and satisfy every doubt; and here we may remark that of the myriads, who from the beginning of time, have suffered by the inhumanity of man, the great majority have so suffered, under the sanction either of

prescriptive usage, or of positive law, which have been revered for their antiquity, and regarded as existing by Divine right. And hence the very fact of a system respecting the justice of which, doubts force themselves upon our minds, having the sanction of long years of approval, and statutes piled upon statutes—so far from satisfying us of the righteousness of that system, should at once quicken our doubts, since it tends to explain the moral phenomena of wicked principles so embodied into cruel laws, being recognized and upheld by men, whom, judging by their general character and practice, we might deem incapable of knowingly encouraging any sort of tyranny. Thus it is that, by the inexplicable provision of an allwise Providence, truths the most glorious and mighty are allowed to slumber in the breasts of men. Thus, even now do they sleep in the bosoms of our southern brethren, who hug the accursed system as a boon from heaven. On all questions relating to it, whether religious, political, or financial: “their counsel,” in the language of the wise man, “is carried headlong;” “they meet with darkness in the day time and grope in the noonday as in the night.”*

In England the light at last dawned—slavery in her West Indian colonies is a thing that is past, and the slave trade, though still continued, exists, not as a legitimate traffic, but as akin to piracy. This moral revolution originated not with the great and the powerful; science had no share in it; learning knew not of its beginning; and the Church, in whose sacred bosom it should have been nurtured, with a few noble exceptions among her prelates, coldly regarded it with a selfish eye. It was effected by the simple power of truths uttered by single-minded and earnest men—truths not by them disco-

* Proverbs v. 14.

vered, but ancient as eternity and known to all—and which had often before been proclaimed from the rostrum, and the pulpit, with the fire of genius, and the beauty of oratory, but never with the same heartfelt conviction, the same practical application, the same deep purpose to reform the evil.

“ If feeling does not prompt,
If from the soul the language does not come
By its own impulse to impel the hearts
Of hearers with communicated power,
In vain you strive——”*

The first movement of that moral earthquake, which has shattered the foundations of slavery throughout the globe, and engulfed it forever in the West Indian colonies, and whose shocks are even now most sensibly convulsing its sister tyranny of America, was made by a few humble individuals in London, of the Society of Friends, who, with fearless resolve and far-reaching aim, met, in 1783, “to consider what steps they should take for the relief and liberation of the negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the slave trade on the coast of Africa.” By frequent meetings, the circulation of tracts and pamphlets, and the efforts of Clarkson, who was secured as their agent, they steadily gained ground; their committee became an important body, and the souls of many, touched with the truths they uttered, were gradually moulded into one. Gentlemen of wealth, and rank, and influence, both in the Parliament and the Church, favored their efforts, and contributed to their funds. As they enlarged their numbers, and rose in importance, the hostility of the Slavery Party increased. Their principles were denounced as “hypocritical, fanatic and methodistical.” “Abolition,” it was predicted, “would lead to insurrection, massacre

* Goethe's Faust.—*Anster's Translation.*

and ruin, in the Colonies and in Great Britain, to the reduction of her revenue, the decay of her naval strength, and the bankruptcies of her merchants and manufacturers." The trade was justified by the press, and vindicated by the pulpit on scriptural grounds. The first bill for its suppression introduced into Parliament, was met with the most malignant hostility, and denounced as "only fit for the bigotry of the twelfth century."

Slavery, as it had commenced, so had it its stronghold in *avarice*, that base passion of our nature, that perhaps above all others, hardens the heart, and narrows the intellect, and blunts the conscience, and which exhibits, day by day, convincing proofs of the saying of Holy Writ, that "the love of money is the root of all evil." "The interest," says Clarkson,* "by which it was supported, was not that of a few individuals, nor of one body, but of many bodies of men. It was interwoven again into the system of the commerce and the revenue of nations. Hence the merchant and the planter, the mortgagee and the manufacturer, the politician, the legislator, the cabinet minister, lifted up their voices against the annihilation of it." Ten times was Wilberforce defeated in his endeavors to obtain its suppression by the House of Commons, but the perseverance of the abolitionists was at last rewarded, and in 1807 the slave trade was abolished by act of Parliament. Negotiations were subsequently had with other nations, for the entire abandonment of the traffic, until, in 1836, it was prohibited by every christian nation in Europe and America.†

Thus will Truth and Justice finally triumph over falsehood and oppression. Their high influence, viewless as the winds, and intangible as the magnet's sympathy,

* History of the Slave Trade.

† Preface to Jay's "View of the Actions of the Federal Government, in behalf of Slavery."

wafted from heart to heart, with all the powers of nature for allies, gathers strength with each setting sun ; and the oppressors who, trembling with the presentiment of defeat, attempt to stay the progress of Liberty by fierce resolves, and penal laws, and brutal force, exhibit wisdom akin to that of Xerxes, when he would bind the Hellespont with fetters, and punish it with scourges.

Having glanced at the steps which led to the abolition of the slave trade, we pass to a review of the measures which preceded the abolition of West Indian slavery. And here we may remark, that we are opening a new page in the history of the world. There is no chapter, it is true, that has not its own interest, or which teaches not its peculiar lesson. Those which depict the rise and fall of kingdoms, the advance and decay of nations, the mutations and ravages of time, furnish abundant food for melancholy reflection. In all, we may trace the workings of the hopes, and fears, and passions, which exist in every breast, and learn that human expectations are generally disappointed ; that pride is sure to be humbled, and soaring ambition to meet a fall ; that despotic power always becomes tyrannical, and that tyranny, in its corrupting and blighting influence, is sooner or later its own avenger. But we seek in vain for the results of honesty, justice and kindness, as exemplified in the dealings of nation towards nation : or in the conduct of the mighty and powerful towards the defenceless and the weak. It was reserved for England to furnish this missing chapter in the history of the world—this unlimned picture in the Gallery of Time. As she was the first to abolish the slave trade, so was she the first of the kingdoms of the earth to annihilate negro slavery : and while we glance at other of the European cabinets only to find

“ Kingly conclaves stern and bold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold,”

her parliament were discussing how they might break the yoke and let the oppressed go free. The abolitionists continued their appeals long after the trade was forbidden, until almost the whole nation was aroused to the iniquity of slavery, and with one voice demanded its abolition. Although the system in their colonies was not, as a general rule, attended with as gross outrages as in our democratic country, there was still enough to awaken the warmest indignation of all, possessing the creed of christians, or the feelings of men. "What increased the guilt of the colonists," in the words of Bishop Wilson,* whose language and conduct in relation to the question contrasts strongly with those of some of the Right Rev. Fathers of the American Church,† was, that "it was all supported by a systematic opposition to reform in the assemblies; by artful and industrious perversion and concealment of facts, false representation, and colorable excuses; by a pertinacity and folly; and by an infatuation," continues the Bishop, "which bears along the West Indian body in blindly defending a system in open hostility with every principle of humanity, with every view of just policy, and with every dictate of Religion."

We are accustomed to read, with wonder if not with incredulity, the story of *Milo* of old, who commenced

* Tract on the Sinfulness of West India Slavery.

† The annexed *ex-cathedra* decisions, show the light in which slavery is regarded among the Episcopal clergy of the south, and how firm is its stronghold in the bosom of our Church. It is indeed sad that by the shepherds themselves, are the sheep devoured, and Christians exposed to the taunt of the infidel, "Prope templo—procul Deo."

"Slavery is not forbidden by the Divine Law; so it is left to our own judgment whether we hold slaves or not."—REV. DR. DALCHO of South Carolina.

"No man or set of men in our day are entitled to pronounce it wrong; and we add that SLAVERY, AS IT EXISTS AT THE PRESENT DAY, IS AGREEABLE TO THE ORDER OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE."—REV. G. W. FREEMAN, *Sermon preached Nov. 1834. Endorsed by the Right Rev. Bishop Ives of South Carolina.*

with carrying a calf, and continued the exercise day by day until it was become a full grown beast, under the load of which he walked erect, scarcely inconvenienced by its weight ; but what is the weight of an ox, compared with that burthen of guilt and infamy, which long years of tyranny accumulate upon the heads of the oppressors, and beneath which slaveholders, bearing the name of Christians, live and move unmindful of the load, and assume the part and bearing of honest men, as if neither robbery, nor cruelty, nor baseness, were heaped upon their souls, and as if no cloud of vengeance brooded over their daily walk. In former times arraigned felons, when they refused to answer to the charge, "guilty or not guilty," were said to be "dumb *visitatione Dei*," and we can explain the phenomena of such moral insensibility and religious blindness, only by recognizing their existence as permitted or rather ordained by God.

To remedy this two-fold evil, to free the slaveholder from guilt and the slave from oppression, England, like a free and religious people, determined to exert her power. The consent of the colonists to emancipation it was impossible to obtain. "Few love to hear the sins they love to act," and they were determined to resist to the uttermost every attempt to deprive them of the property they claimed, in the bones and sinews of their oppressed dependents. Parliament having exhausted the language of admonition and remonstrance, at length addressed them in tones of authority, and on the 28th August, 1833, passed an act, declaring that within twelve months slavery should positively cease. The change proposed to be effected, was not however, a change to perfect freedom. This course was indeed advocated now by many, who were satisfied that it was proper to cease from evil, not gradually, but at once—who thought the path of duty always safe, and who did not believe that the

Almighty would allow acts of justice and mercy to be rewarded by rapine and massacre. But the government had less faith ; they feared the effect upon the minds of the newly created freemen of the remembrance of "the innumerable multitude of wrongs" inflicted during dreary years of servitude. They knew what terrible charms there are in the idea of retribution, to men smarting under tyranny, but they knew not the effect of kindness. Of the results of this treatment they had no experience. They reasoned without a guide, and conscience made cowards of them all. Strange ! to imagine that they could judge of the feelings and conduct of a freeman, by his feelings and conduct as a slave.

The poet has well said—

" Within a darksome prison, whose stern bounds
Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth.
His soul asserts not his humanity."

And such an existence is scarcely more than a living death,—for what are life and freedom

" But the unfettered use
Of all the powers which God for use has given."

It was accordingly provided by the Act of Emancipation, that slavery should be succeeded by an apprenticeship. The colonies were invited to anticipate the action of parliament in ordaining laws, by making them themselves, and submitting them to the home government for approval ; and to silence the grumbings of the masters, and the charge of exercising their philanthropy at the expense of others, parliament ordered compensation for their loss to be paid in sterling money ; and that payment was withheld, until effectual measures had been taken by the colonies, for the protection of the newly emancipated population. Having thus endeavored to provide for the enactment of proper laws ; in order to

secure their fair administration, magistrates were specially deputed from England, who should be independent of local authorities and unbiassed by local interests.

The chief ends proposed to be effected by the act, were the abolition of the principle of slavery, the elevation of the slave from the condition of a chattel to that of a man, possessing rights and duties, responsible to the laws, and entitled to their protection. It gave entire freedom to all children who had been born within the six years previous. It relieved, to some extent, the physical condition of the apprentices, and gave them one fourth of the time which had been before appropriated by the masters. It provided for the admission of their testimony in the courts of justice, encouraged them to make contracts and receive wages, acknowledged their marriages, and removed various obstacles to their education, and their advancement in religious knowledge. It enabled them to demand their freedom, on tendering the value of their remaining services, and exempted females from the lash.

On the other hand, to guard against the supposed evils of instant emancipation, labor was confined in its former channels by retaining the obligation to their former masters, although curtailed in extent, and existing under a new sanction.*

Two of the colonies, Antigua and Bermuda, anticipating the evils of the apprenticeship, wisely avoided the necessity for its adoption by decreeing the entire abolition of slavery, and the substitution of perfect freedom on the day appointed, a step which they never afterwards had the slightest occasion to regret. The other islands adhered to the apprenticeship, as still continuing to the masters a limited power over their slaves, and proceeded

* Edinburgh Review, Jan. 1833, p. 434.

to carry into operation the plan proposed to them by the home government.

The difficulties that were to be encountered in doing this were neither few nor trifling. Within twelve months laws were to be passed by the colonial legislatures; and had they the wish to be honest, they had scarcely the skill to secure the ends proposed. Then there were hosts of planters, attorneys, managers, and overseers, bitter with disappointment and ready to avail themselves of every quibble or mistake to infringe the rights of the negro; and the special magistrates, unaccustomed to their duties and without precedents to guide them, were liable to constant vexation and obstruction in the administration of the law.*

To lessen the power of these magistrates, an appeal lay from their decisions to the colonial courts, filled with persons interested in West Indian property, swelling with West Indian prejudices, and exasperated against the special magistrates, "as being trusted with power from which their own class was jealously excluded." "Here," it has been well remarked, "were traces of slavery which it was beyond the power of Parliament to abolish."

Ay! there were traces of slavery, which will linger long after the Parliament that abolished the system shall have mouldered into dust. Think you that such an outrage upon humanity, persisted in for centuries, can be atoned for by an act of Parliament? Can the man who has shattered his constitution by years of dissipation renew his youth by a resolution to reform? *Facilius est destruere quam construere*—it is easier to destroy than to build up; and here, it was not their own work that they had demolished. In reducing men to chattels, they had pulled down a house which they builded not, and laid its heavenly materials level with the dust.

* *Edinburgh Review.*

None can say to a wicked principle once admitted, thus far shalt thou go and no farther. The results of acts committed are beyond control ; and now that the English people would have abolished slavery, root and branch, they found it interwoven with every thread of the political and social fabric, and wielding an influence upon the character of every individual who claimed as property his brother man.

An auxiliary act, in compliance with the requisition of Parliament, was passed in December, 1833, by the Legislature of Jamaica ; and to the history of emancipation in this one colony time induces me to confine my remarks, more especially as the progress of emancipation in the several islands developed very similar results. This act, although extremely defective in many important points, was, on being forwarded to England, duly approved, its defects being regarded as oversights rather than as intentional departures from the spirit of the British act. The island was declared entitled to her share of the compensation, which from 15 millions had been increased to 20 millions, and its payment was accompanied by the expression of a hope that they would make their act "really adequate and satisfactory." With regard to the policy of this course an English reviewer observes, that it is easier to understand the feelings under which Lord Stanley acted, than justify his yielding to them, since the approval of an imperfect act was likely to entail its imperfections upon those which should follow. According to its provisions the negroes were to work 45 hours in the week ; the offences they might commit were loosely defined, as were also the obligations of the masters, with whom a degree of arbitrary authority was still left as to supplies of food and clothing.

The passage of the act of emancipation soon became

known among the colored population, and was hailed by them with the utmost joy. They knew not its particular provisions, nor did they all comprehend that they were still to remain in a modified bondage ; but even after this was explained to them, they were satisfied that they were to be no longer slaves, but were to be elevated to the rank of men.

Christmas was approaching, and the masters confidently predicted trouble. Many partook in a measure of their fears, and the members of the Legislature, after being prorogued by Lord Mulgrave, in a speech of congratulations at the triumph of justice over oppression, returned to their homes to allay any agitation which the good news might excite among their dependants. During the accustomed holidays, the number of the troops were doubled ; the militia were ordered to be in preparation, and other precautions were taken, to prevent or subdue the riots and insurrection so confidently predicted. But all continued quiet. The only change was the greater cheerfulness visible in every face, and the first prophesies of the disappointed masters vanished in smoke. During the year that was then commencing, the preparations for the eventful first of August proceeded slowly. Lord Mulgrave resigned the government on account of his health, and was succeeded by Lord Sligo, who, although himself largely interested in West Indian property, hailed with delight the glorious change, and immediately devoted himself with humanity and alacrity, to further the work of emancipation. In June the Assembly again met and passed some amendments to their act proposed by Lord Stanley.

The first of August, the day so long hoped for by some, so much dreaded by others, arrived ; and the change to Freedom is thus described by Lord Sligo.* "In all parts of the island, with the exception of St.

* Report of 13th August, 1834.

Ann's, the transition from slavery to apprenticeship, has been effected in the most satisfactory manner." The day was generally given to devotional exercises, and in many of the chapels service was performed constantly as often as new processions of auditors presented themselves. There was scarcely any disorder or drunkenness, and on several estates festive dinners were given by the proprietors to the apprentices. The succeeding Sunday also was passed in the most quiet manner, and the houses of worship were again crowded. Time wore on and disturbances had occurred in several places, but in almost every instance were traced to the indiscretion or bad will of the overseers, and the impediments they put in the way of the laborers. Yet, although quiet and peaceable, the apprentices did not all seem disposed to work, and many fears were entertained by their friends, and loud outcries made by their enemies, while every disadvantageous circumstance was magnified by the masters, who had strong hopes of recovering the use of the whip, which had been transferred to the magistrates. As Christmas again approached, things assumed a more cheerful aspect, and the reports called in by Lord Sligo, established the fact, that "wherever wages were regularly paid on Saturday night, any extent of work might be performed."* And such continued to be the general history of the apprenticeship as long as it continued.

The cry of insurrection was still occasionally raised, and complaints of idleness and insubordination were not dropped. But wherever wages were regularly paid, no difficulty was found in obtaining work, except on Saturdays, which the laborers appreciating the value of occasional recreation, and little addicted to the acquisition of gain, generally preferred to retain as a holiday. On a few plantations, where the managers acted kindly

* Parliamentary papers relative to the abolition of slavery, 1837.—P. 115.

and judiciously, the amount of work done far exceeded that performed in slavery ; and what was better still, it was done cheerfully, and the struggle was said to have been from bad to good, and from good to better.

But countless enormities could still be committed ; many might be robbed of their time, and food, and liberty ; assaulted, terrified, and overworked, and yet never complain, because they knew not their rights, or knowing, were unable to maintain them. Legal right to punish, although taken from the masters, was given to native parish magistrates, and these had still the power to subject offending apprentices to " the horrors of whips and chains, collars and solitary cells."* Some assertions of the abuse of this power induced the English government specially to depute an officer to inquire into their truth. For these abuses, little blame, if any, was attributable to the English gentlemen, who acted as special magistrates ; since their authority was set at defiance by the local magistrates and parish vestries. The error was in the system and in the laws, and Lord Sligo, and Sir Lionel Smith, in their respective administrations, proved worthy representatives of their country, in faithfully pursuing that policy of justice, in the exercise of which, she had become to the world, so rare an example.

The evils attendant upon the system, arising chiefly, as we have seen from the impolitic and unjust conduct of the plantation proprietors, being fully established, Parliament resolved to curtail the legislative power of the colonial assemblies in relation to the apprenticeship. To avoid this step the colonies themselves determined to abridge the term of its continuance from 6 years to 4, and we hasten on to the 1st of August, 1838, when it was

* Edinburgh Review, Jan., 1838.

decreed the apprenticeship should cease, and be succeeded by entire and perfect freedom.

And here we may stop to remark what had been the condition and character of this people in past years, that we may appreciate the extent of the change about to be made from slavery to liberty. Those who were now to be raised to the dignity of men, had been used as beasts of burthen, and reduced to the level of the brutes. Though immortal beings gifted with reason, and destined to live in other world's when time shall be no longer: endowed with consciences to understand, and capacity to obey the divine law: they had been shut out from all light, all knowledge: and amid the darkness, in which from infancy they were enveloped, they had bowed submissively, and with scarcely a feeling of degradation to the will of their usurping masters. According to the testimony of those who had brought them to so low a depth, their moral sensibilities were crushed—"the man was dead within the slave."*

Living beneath such gross injustice, it was no wonder if they had learned to steal from their masters: for a severer morality than theirs, would fully justify greater reprisals. With few to teach to them the law of God, debarred from searching his holy word, it is not surprising that their morality was of the laxest kind: and surrounded by debased companions and tyrannical overseers, licentiousness, passion and cowardice, are traits we might naturally expect to meet. Reason, being systematically debased from its very birth, and all knowledge being taken away, the sweet influence of domestic life unknown—there being to the slave no home, no sanctuary, not even the right to protect his wife, his daugh-

* Dr. CHANNING's Work on Slavery, wherein the character and influence of the system are very ably developed.

ter, from insult, or his infant children from the ruthless grasp of the pitiless trader, what could possibly result from a system of such devilish oppression, but a most degraded race?

It may be said of slavery as Pym said in the impeachment of Stafford, "Other treasons are against the rule of the law, but this is against the very being of the law." You have doubtless heard that it is contrary to the common law; more than that, it is against all law. "Of law," be it ever remembered, in the glowing words of *Hooker*, "no less can be acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world. All things in heaven and earth do her homage, the least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power." Man is a creature fitted for the control of law—of law that is based upon justice and the word of God—law which his understanding comprehends, and his reason recognizes, and his conscience approves, and which both his interest and his fears alike incline him to obey. Such is man, such was he intended to be by his Maker, who has given his sanction to the righteous enactments of the powers that be, and has invested with new authority and new solemnity, human statutes, based upon the eternal principles of his being. Thus lending to law a divine sanction, and giving to us a faculty to which it directly appeals, it is at once our guide and our guard. Though intangible, it is felt—invisible, it is feared; always present, either to bestow protection or to avenge. Here we see the causes that first brought man from a barbarous to a civilized state, and that preserves individuals and communities in the beneficial relations of the social compact. All this divinely constituted system slavery destroys. The rule of passive obedience, dispenses with conscience; it substitutes the master's will for a sense of duty, silences the voice of God speaking within us, and puts in his

stead the caprices of a mortal man. The supports of this system must of course be very different from those of the first. The nice machinery of the moral nature is here useless; the inward monitor is more than useless. The ten thousand links that bind the subject and the citizen to his king and country, that go to make up his *amor patriæ*: the honest pride of character, laudable ambition, true self interest, filial, parental and wedded love—love of home, charity, and all the graces of christian piety—public spirit, generous rivalry, prudence, economy, and Law—superintending, ordering, protecting, punishing and rewarding—all these are exchanged in slavery for one check, and that the meanest which our nature allows of. All these holy, honorable, praiseworthy motives and influences, are exchanged for *fear*—fear, not of God, but of man; not of offending against heaven, but against the master; fear, not of future retribution, but of immediate bodily punishment. For the invisible spiritual links that bind the souls of men in social compact, slaveholders have only material chains to enthrall the body: and lest the mind rise superior to them, and elevate the slave into a man, they crush it in its infancy, stifle its energies, and bury it in darkness.

Such had been for generation after generation the sad destiny of this people: and looking only at their actual condition, without reference to the DUTY of Emancipation, it is little to be wondered at, that a sudden change from slavery to freedom, should be viewed by some with dread, and by many with anxiety.

The act abolishing the apprenticeship, on the 1st of August, 1838, was promulgated in the preceding month of June, and produced no other effect upon the laboring population than to render them universally quiet and happy: and some of the proprietors began immediately to make bargains for future work. The agricultural

condition of the island was such as might be expected with a slave-cursed soil. So awful a violation of the laws of nature and of God, ever brings with it its own blight. "Even the earth itself," says MONTAGUE, "which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the free-born laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of a slave. Strange as this may seem to the thoughtless, it speaks to us a solemn lesson, teaching us that the world in her age faithfully obeys the word, spoken when she was young. As the blood of Abel cried from the ground and brought down a curse upon the murderer, so also do we read, "Behold the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth."* And when we remember that, besides the withholding of just wages, the slaves are constantly subjected to cruelties, in comparison of which, the blow of Cain was one of mercy, we may understand how the curse then pronounced has not ceased in our own day. "And now saith the Lord, thou art cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; *when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength.*†

It was naturally to be expected that the evils caused by slavery, should be charged by wicked men, as the fruits of freedom even at her birth, and Sir Lionel Smith thus writes to Lord Glenelg, "Your Lordship must further expect to hear of worn-out and moneyless estates being totally abandoned, for want of means to pay the laborer. 'This will be magnified as one of the evils of freedom.'" "But," he adds, after stating some apprehensions, "whatever difficulties may arise, must be im-

* St. James v. 4.

† Genesis iv. 10, 11.

material, for one great blessing, FREEDOM has overspread the land, and its virtues will counteract all the designs of the oppressor and wrongdoer." The great day arrived, and the colored population went free. Young men and maidens, old men and children, together were endowed with those natural rights, which they had never till then enjoyed. "The day," writes Sir Lionel Smith, "was observed, by proclamation, as one of thanksgiving and prayer, and it is quite impossible to do justice to the good order, decorum, and gratitude which the whole of the population manifested on the happy occasion." Though joy beamed on every countenance, it was throughout the land tempered with solemn thanksgiving to God, and the churches and chapels were every where filled with the happy people in humble offerings of praise for the great blessing he has conferred upon them."

To all christian observers, such an acknowledgment should have afforded a satisfactory assurance, that Heaven would continue to smile upon the new-born people, who thus recognised, with prayer and praise, the Divine Author of their deliverance. The happy influences of emancipation were instantaneous in their effects. "I had long known," writes the Right Rev. Bishop of Jamaica, "the objects of this benevolent measure, as the most patient, enduring and long suffering people on earth, and not easily provoked: but it was not till the actual promulgation, of this great and glorious measure of justice and mercy, that I was enabled fully to appreciate their advancement in christian principles. * * *

The quiet manner in which the whole has passed off, has added much to the effect, and made a deep impression on men's minds. It has encouraged and animated the good, and confounded and disappointed the

bad.”* “I feel convinced,” adds his lordship, “that nothing less than this happy change in their condition could ever have held out to us the hope of effectually improving the people : and so long as one link of the hateful chain of slavery remained, that great work must have been delayed.”†

A single disturbance took place, soon afterwards, which, although related to the prejudice of the negroes, actually redounded to their credit : since it exhibited the warmth of their affection, and their readiness to incur peril in defence of their known friends. It originated in a determination on the part of some of the old masters, to burn in effigy the Rev. Mr. Knibb, a Baptist clergyman, and the favorite minister of the slaves, to whose faithful and zealous services, their religious and moral improvement, was, in a great degree, owing. Rumor magnified this report into an intention to hang him in reality ; and the laborers immediately armed themselves with guns and bludgeons, to effect a rescue.

“Nothing was now wanting,” in the words of the Governor, “to the success of free labor in Jamaica, but just and fair dealing towards the laborers.” This unfortunately was wanting. They were subjected to constant petty oppressions, and especially in the matter of rent. The planters holding all the land, were guilty of the vilest extortion, and Sir Lionel Smith remarks, that in some cases the laborer was credited with five shillings a week for his labor, and charged eight shillings a week for rent ; thus bringing him into debt three shillings a week, with nothing to provide for himself and his family.‡ Not unfrequently, rent was charged for each individual

* Volume of condensed Parliamentary Papers relating to Emancipation, p. 5

† *Sine libertate nihil bonum est, nihil expetendum hominibus.* PLUTARCH, in *Agésilao*.

‡ Parliamentary Documents, before quoted, page 9.

of a family ! and if complaints were made, the tenants were threatened with expulsion, while the fruits of their labor was yet on the ground. It was falsely reported, that the laborers believed that they owned the huts, in which they were accustomed to live, and for this reason refused to pay rent. In reply to these charges, one of the missionaries, in a letter to the Marquis of Normanby, says, after positively denying that the tenants held such an opinion, "I freely admit that the attachment of the laborers to the places of their birth, and the burial-places of their ancestors or offspring, is so strong, that they would rather make any sacrifice than leave them ; and of this, too many managers have taken a disreputable advantage."

The negroes showed generally a praiseworthy independence, in refusing to accept exorbitant demands, or even to work at all for those planters who, during the continuance of slavery, had been distinguished for their cruelty. Their conduct continued peaceable and orderly in the extreme, and although the aggregate crop was backward and smaller in amount than that of the last year ; this was in a great measure owing to various causes over which they had no control, as the want of early arrangements by the planters, the exaction of rent and threats of ejectment, and the machinery of many estates being out of repair.

The effect of the change upon the peasantry, and the whole colony, became daily more and more developed. Savings Banks were opened, and deposits immediately made ; the internal trade sensibly improved, crime was astonishingly diminished, and watchman on the properties were found to be unnecessary. New elements of prosperity began to be exhibited in the purchase of land at higher prices, in the increase of buildings, and the erection of temples of worship, in the improved culti-

vation of the soil, and the greater division of wealth among the laboring class. Women were no longer obliged to work in the fields, nor were there left any constables to abuse their authority, and confine in cells for fancied insolence. The toil of the workmen was much abridged by the introduction of the plough, which the interests of jobbing masters with gangs of slaves, had heretofore prevented. Rapid progress was made in civilization; polygamy became rare; marriages increased twenty fold, and parents who had but lately lived an heathen life, constantly brought their children to the baptismal font. At the beginning of the year 1840, the disposition among the negroes to purchase land had greatly extended, and several hundred acres were sold near one village at £6 an acre. The price of real estate in parts of the island, rose beyond all reason,* and an estate purchased in 1838 for £500 was sold in lots for £2,000.—The additional number of freeholds with electoral rights acquired from the first of August, 1838, to the first of May, 1840, was 934, and the number of conveyances of land under 20 acres, during the same period, according to the return from the island Secretary office, was 2074 acres.†

The progress of education and religious instruction continued most encouraging. The schools were crowded with children dressed with more neatness than formerly; men past forty years of age might be seen learn-

* From a despatch of the Governor of British Guiana, bearing date 14th July 1841, we quote the following instance from many others of the purchase of lands by the laborers at high prices. Plantation *Better-ver-Wayling*, owned by 61 laborers formerly slaves, for \$22,000, (say £4,714 5s. 3½d. sterling.) New Orange, Nassau, bought by 128 persons, formerly slaves, for \$50,000, (£10,416 13s. 4d. sterling)—of which \$23,000 were paid down, and the remainder in three instalments at 3, 6 and 9 months.

Victoria, the first estate bought by laborers after the abolition of slavery, for 30,000 guilders, has now upwards of 100 houses.

† Despatch of Sir C. T. Metcalf, 9th June, 1840.—*Parliamentary Papers* p. 100.

ing to spell, and the burthen of supporting the schools was borne by the peasantry with the utmost cheerfulness. The missionaries in particular, devoted themselves to the work of education, and in one parish alone, 2,000 children received under their superintendence daily and weekly instruction.

The complete success of *free-labor*, notwithstanding all the disadvantages attending its introduction, signally disproved the prediction of the planters. Its superiority to slave-labor, in every point of view, was made clearly manifest; and on many plantations, the very first crop was taken off at a less expense than during slavery. Despite the new signs of prosperity, and the increased value of landed property, complaints of the deplorable state of the colony were still made, although known to be false by those who uttered them. "I know," remarks a magistrate in his report, "one of these who purchased a property three years since. He was lately offered nearly treble the amount he gave for it. Did he take it? No; but in the same breath he would assert that the country was ruined." The same able magistrate, Mr. Grant, also states that during the apprenticeship, he employed on an average 200 laborers a week; since its abolition only 25! that the property was in better order than it had ever been before, and that this was done by laborers who had completed the work on their own plantations.* The peasantry seemed determined to disprove the statements that had been made respecting their indisposition to work, and their inability to provide for themselves and their families.

There ports of the magistrates show, that they not only supported their families in comfort, but supplied them with luxuries, for which an increasing taste was manifested;

* Parliamentary Documents, quoted ante, p. 177.

and with regard to the charge of idleness, we may quote a despatch from Lord John Russell, to the Governor of Barbadoes, of the 15th January, 1840. "The returns of sugar raised by the laborers in the several parishes from their allotments of land are interesting, as showing a capacity for thrift and industry in the negro peasantry, which, with judicious treatment and adequate encouragement, will insure the advancement and prosperity of the island."*

During the year 1840, we find the disputes between the proprietors and the tenantry, as regards rent and wages still continuing—the independence of the latter, checking the extortion of the former. Rent was still occasionally charged for each individual of a family, in order to extort labor; but unless fair-dealing was used towards the laborers, it was impossible to obtain it continuously. "In parts of the island," says Sir C. T. Metcalf, "many of the negroes have purchased lands and are settling for themselves. I have heard of their paying as high a rate as £50 an acre." Thus fortunately induced by the petty tyranny of the planters to become independent of them, it is little wonder, that they preferred to work for themselves, upon their own freeholds, than for their former masters and present persecutors. "I turn," says the Governor, "from the cheerless prospects of the proprietors, to a more pleasing order of things; the thriving condition of the peasantry is very striking and gratifying. I do not suppose that any peasantry in the world have so much independence and enjoyment: their behaviour is peaceable and in some respects admirable. They are fond of attending divine service, and are to be seen on the Lord's day thronging to their respective churches and chapels dressed in good clothing

* Parliamentary Papers relative to Barbadoes, ——— 1840, p. 33.

and many of them riding on horseback. They send their children to school, and pay for their schooling—they subscribe to the erection of churches and chapels—marriage is general among the people—their morals—I understand is much improved, and their sobriety is remarkable.*

The moral courage and independence of this people when we remember their past history is really striking. "Their unvarying object," as asserted by one of the magistrates, "is to secure a good name." The old habits and feelings of slavery which seemed to be identified with their very nature, have beyond all expectation, been supplanted by the change to freedom, and the new duties relations and aims, which it brought to light. Those who so lately obeyed with servile submission the beck of a task-master, are now cautious in adopting advice, even from the magistrates and religious teachers, "unless it is consistent with their own deliberate reasonings on its rectitude." "In this wholesome state of things," remarks the magistrate, "I see the strongest security for the continued peace and good order of the island."

With regard to crime, the reports of the different magistrates in August, 1840, are but slightly varied from one which is in these words, "crime is a stranger in these parts."

All qualifications and distinctions on account of color have ceased. All have equal rights in law, and almost equal advantages in society. Civil and religious liberty are universally enjoyed, and the press is free—more than this, the government are determined to do their duty, and to continue that just and equal policy, beneath the exercise of which so many blessings have sprung into

* Parliamentary Documents, Jamaica, p. 90.

existence. "Let it be our study," said the Governor in his opening speech to the assembly, "to confirm and, if possible, to improve this happy state."*

Surely time has painted few lovelier pictures. It has long been said that

"Tears attend
The steps of wrong,"

and as truly does joy follow in the path of justice.

Such are the glorious fruits of freedom, even among a people born and bred in slavery. Liberty, the crowning glory of civilization, was the heaven-born thought, the bright idea, that in olden times of Paganism, was imaged by the golden shell of Orpheus. It moves the firm rocks of tyranny, and converts the brutal wanderers of the forest into reasonable men. At the sound of its music, according to ancient story, the wheel of Ixion revolved no more—Tantalus forgot his burning thirst—the vulture that preyed upon Tityos abandoned his repast—the stone of Sisyphus was stayed in its descent—and the lost Eurydice was allowed to leave the gloom of Hades, for the realms of light. Such were the feats told in heathen fable, and, as you have seen, they are more than verified by the real practical results of liberty, that same goddess, more beautiful and of mightier strength when christianized and enlightened. She has snatched from the proud oppressors the sceptres of their tyranny, and dashed them in pieces like a potter's vessel. She has unbarred the prison doors, broken the whips and chains, and let the oppressed go free. She has opened the windows of Heaven and poured its blessed light on their darkened souls. Music more pleasant than the harmonies of Orpheus does she discourse to the free mother and her free children, basking in the sun light

* Parliamentary Documents, p. 222.

and fearing no longer the overseers lash. The whip-extorted toil, lengthened from day to day and from year to year, endless as the revolving wheel of Ixion, is stayed for ever. The burning of revenge, the canker of grief, the withering of despair, which preyed upon their souls as the vulture upon Tityos, but inflicting deeper wounds than those of the body, have given place to purer thoughts and happier feelings. Satisfied now may be the thirst for knowledge, the longing for life, the yearning for better things, which in slavery were unattainable as the fruits that grew above the head of Tantalus, or the waters that mocked his parched lips. The dreadful burthen of oppression weightier than the stone to raise which Sisyphus toiled crushing every hope—every endeavor—is removed : and like Eurydice, the down-trodden slaves, lost as they had been to humanity and themselves, and seeming but as shadows of men—emerge from the depths of degradation and darkness, into the fulness of manhood and the light of freedom.

Recent statements made in the English Parliament respecting Jamaica, since the forgoing pages were written, have been so grossly distorted by some American prints, that persons relying on their statements, would have been justified in believing, that the predictions of the planters were after all to be verified, and emancipation even at this day prove a failure. On the 22d of March, 1842, Lord Stanley moved for a select committee to inquire into the state of the West Indian colonies in reference to the existing relations between employers and laborers, the rate of wages, supply of labor, *et cætera*. The noble lord remarked, that “Emancipation had in the benefits which were derived from it excelled the most sanguine expectations of the most ardent advocates of the measure. IN EVERY ONE OF THE ISLANDS the physical condition and prosperity of the laboring classes had reached to an ex-

tent far greater than had been anticipated ; and what was still more gratifying, the improvement in their physical condition was accompanied by a corresponding improvement in their social and moral habits." After recapitulating various particulars of their advancement, he said, "to show that he did not exaggerate the improvement, which had taken place in the habits and condition of the West Indian laborer, he would read to the House an extract from an *official document*, which he had a short time since addressed to a foreign power, in answer to a statement in which the experiment of Emancipation was alluded to as having proved a failure. The words were these : 'It will be found that the British Emancipation took place without the occurrence of a single instance of tumult or disturbance ; that the joy of the negroes on the first of August, 1838, was orderly, sober and religious ; that since Emancipation, the negroes had been thriving and contented ; that they have varied their manner of living, and multiplied their comforts and enjoyments ; that their offences against the laws have become more and more light and unfrequent ; that their morals have been improved ; that marriage has become more and more substituted for concubinage ; that they are eager for education, rapidly advancing in knowledge, and powerfully influenced by the ministers of religion. Such are amongst the results of emancipation, which are plain and indisputable, and these results constitute, in the estimation of Her Majesty's Government and the people of England, THE COMPLETE SUCCESS OF THE BRITISH EMANCIPATION, IN SO FAR AS RELATES TO THE PRIMARY AND PARAMOUNT OBJECTS OF THAT ACT !'"

Lord Stanley, in confirmation of these facts, quoted at length the despatches of Sir C. T. Metcalf, from which we have extracted, and said that to one of these despatches was attached a most singular document show-

ing the number of those who had voluntarily entered their names as owners of possessions liable to taxation, and stating their willingness to bear their proportion of the public burthens. From this it appeared that in one parish, Manchester, the number of tax-payers in the year 1836 was 387, and that they had steadily increased until, in the year 1841, they numbered 1866. The number of freeholders becoming so by the accumulations of their industry assessed in Jamaica, as given by the Governor, were, in 1838, 2014; in 1840, 7848.*

Governor Light of Demarara, it was stated by Lord Stanley, gave similar encouraging views. His lordship then spoke of the very high price of labor in the colonies, owing to the attention which the colored people bestow upon their own freeholds, and the consequent loss to the planters; and this he proposed to remedy by a reduction of the expenses of cultivation by improved management, and also by emigration from the American colonies and the coast of Africa.

Such are the official statements of the English government of the present condition of the islands, which by American editors are distorted into "lamentable accounts,"† and are thus made matter for gratulation to the fawning parasites of slavery.

The high prices of labor from which the planters are now suffering, it is very evident, have resulted in a great

* Parliamentary Documents, p. 228.

† The following paragraph contains the abstract of Lord Stanley's speech, given to the public by the New-York *Commercial Advertiser*. The *Courier and Enquirer* and several other of the daily papers had no notice of it whatever. The "EXPRESS" was an honorable exception, giving a fair summary of the facts. "On Lord Stanley's motion, select committees were ordered to inquire into the state of the British possessions on the west coast of Africa, and into the state of the West Indian colonies in reference to labor, wages, &c., the object being to establish a large emigration from Africa to the West Indies. LORD STANLEY GAVE A LAMENTABLE ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF THINGS IN THE WEST INDIES!!" —*Commercial Advertiser*, April 13, 1842.

degree from the mean and narrow policy which has been pursued by them towards the negroes, from the commencement of the apprenticeship. Twenty millions of pounds sterling did they receive when slavery was abolished. The heaviest curse that ever rested on a nation was then withdrawn. Free labor, more valuable by far than slave labor as the magistrates have proved, was introduced, and with the exercise of only common honesty and ordinary humanity, the planters with perhaps, at first, a few exceptions in those, who during slavery had been as noted for their cruelty, might have commanded as much willing labor as they could possibly desire. Unhappily another policy—a miserable policy engendered by the dark spirit of slavery, not yet extinct in the breasts of the masters was allowed to prevail. The poor negroes, who had been toiling all their lives for others, were now for the first time to labor for themselves, and knew not how to make good bargains; of their guilelessness and ignorance, these “gentlemen of property and standing” took advantage, and in some cases, as already mentioned, the tenant was credited with 5 shillings a week for his labor and charged 8 shillings for rent.*

Such a state of things could not continue long. Day by day the spirit of the slave died, and the spirit of the man grew, and with an independence becoming the free subjects of Great Britain, they determined to acquire property for themselves and to work their own freeholds, unmolested by the selfish and overbearing planters.

This they have done as you have seen, to an extent as remarkable as it was unexpected, and the price of land and of labor has consequently risen. The great body of the people are becoming more virtuous and more happy,

* See ante, p. 25.

and although the exports from the island have diminished, its imports have increased. A disinterested person would suppose that the success of emancipation was complete ; or if the sufferings of a few from the causes which promote the welfare of the many, be regarded as a proof of its failure in a single particular, it is evident, that, the present wants of the planters are not attributable to the English government, are not the result of any mistake in the principles they adopted ; but by the showing of their own magistrates have been brought about by their own cruel treatment and unfair dealing towards the emancipated negroes. There are too, strong reasons for believing, that the presents offerings of the planters, with "worn out and moneyless estates," are owing quite as much to slavery, the loss of which they are lamenting, as to emancipation. Governor Light of British Guiana, in a despatch of January 14, 1841, very sensibly remarks, "Do not the records of every West Indian colony prove that some estates flourished during slavery and the apprenticeship, while others fell to the mortgagee, or were brought to the hammer ? We have in this colony instances of men now living, and struggling against poverty, or who dying have left families in great distress who possessed large estates, ruined during the times of slavery and coercion."*

The Governor of Jamaica, in his speech to the assembly near the close of the last year, announced a more favorable appearance of things for the planters in these words. "The relations between the employers and laborers appear to have arrayed themselves on the natural basis of mutual interests. The want of continuous labor is still complained of in some districts, but not so generally as before * * * The ease, independence and

* Parliamentary Papers relative to British Guiana, 1841, p. 216.

other advantages enjoyed by the laboring population, are not, I believe, surpassed by those of the same class in any country on the face of the earth; and although to these causes must be partly ascribed the want of continuous labor, we cannot but rejoice at so much good, and are bound to bear cheerfully its attendant difficulties. The general good conduct and orderly habits of the people and their improved feeling towards their employers are just grounds for unqualified congratulation.”*

This history teaches lessons of deep importance, both to the abolitionists and the slaveholders of America. Here we see the vast, the wonderful results that may be effected by persevering efforts; to this picture we may point those short-sighted philosophers who would fain persuade us that our philanthropy is dreamy, our schemes visionary, and our end impracticable. If the abolitionists of England had done naught, but approve of abolition in the abstract, slavery in her West Indian colonies would still have been a sad reality. From their success, should we derive additional confidence in the correctness of our principles and the sufficiency of our means, for the attainment of the glorious end we have in view. *Magna est veritas*, and in the promulgation of truth, we anticipate the triumph of justice: remembering that “every principle contains within itself, the germ of a prophecy.”†

The slaveholder may here read at a single glance, the guilt of slavery, the success of emancipation, and the inevitable progress of free principles.

The knell of slavery has begun to sound. The fiat has gone forth, that consigns it to the tomb; and mightier than mortal man must be he that would reverse it. The

* British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter.—London, Dec. 15, 1841.

† Coleridge.

spirit of the age, false as it is in much, is yet, in this, an echo of a voice from Heaven—a voice of Freedom, that is caroled by every bird of the forest, and wafted to the domain of slavery by every northern breeze. Heaven grant that they obey its warning before it comes to them in the whirlwind of the tempest !

It is needless for me to enlarge, upon the conclusive proofs afforded by this history, of the perfect safety and practicability of immediate emancipation—both for the reason that the facts are so clear that they cannot be overlooked, and that I do not suppose you guilty of the impiety, of reasoning upon *the expediency* of performing a plain duty, or of imagining that the Righteous Ruler of the world ever imposes commands upon his creatures, which it could be dangerous for them to obey. Such a doctrine, nevertheless, has been taught, and received by some of little faith : and to such, this history will afford a rebuke to their doubts, and an answer to their fears, if indeed, after distrusting the promises of God, they will dare to believe the facts of an historian.

All arguments of the impracticability of immediate emancipation, and presages of murder and rapine, can have henceforth no force, if any weight is allowed to experience—and the duty of the southern master to our countrymen who are bowed beneath the yoke of slavery, is now written as with a sun-beam, not only in the book of Revelation, but on the page of History.

It was anciently said, “*justitiam injustitia parit*,” injustice brings forth justice—and the sentiment has been verified in every age of the world, by the instinctive principle of resistance to oppression, implanted by the Creator in every breast. May we not venture to hope, in contemplation of this glorious picture, that while the sentiment will ever continue true as of old, new instruments may be used for its fulfilment : and that in this

land, dear to us as the place of our birth, and the home of our fathers, justice will triumph—not by insurrection among the slaves—but by the righteous efforts of those who, being themselves free, remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; that by their efforts, and the free act of the southern planters, the winged soul will be loosed from her chains, and from the prison-house of slavery come forth “the eagle spirit of the free;” that before another generation shall be swept from the verge of time, our country may assume a place among the free nations of the earth, our flag no longer wave at the pirate’s mast, nor the staple product of our land bear to foreign climes the taint of oppression, and the stain of blood.

FINIS.

